

The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969



Walkout Editorial

Turn to page 2 to read our editorial about the LHS walkout.



School Safety Op-Ed

Turn to page 3 to read about the locked doors at LHS.

Volume LX Issue V—April 2018

Students join nationwide walkout to protest gun violence

Talia Blatt
News Editor

On March 15, at least 1,000 Lexington High School students walked out of the school, part of a nationwide call for gun control amplified by a mass shooting in Parkland, FL.

The LHS walkout took place a day later than the nationwide one, as March 14 was a snow day for Lexington Public Schools.

Organized in Lexington by the activist group "Lexington says #ENOUGH," the walkout aimed to spur government response to gun violence.

LHS students joined in chants such as "this is what democracy looks like," and "[Expletive] the NRA." Similar thoughts were prevalent on neon orange posters.

"This is my first walkout

...I'm feeling pretty important. It feels like we're making a difference, even though this isn't the right day, and we're the only people doing it," Kate Bruno, a junior at LHS, said.

Much of the organization took place via social media. LHS members of #ENOUGH used Facebook to promote the walkout and answer questions from interested students. The students also made posters which they hung up around the school.

"The whole thing was student-run so I mainly found out through friends and word of mouth. Social media definitely helped me figure out what was going on," Rayhan Ahmed, a sophomore, said.

Some students thought the walkout provided new opportunities.

"I thought it was a great way for LHS to endorse political activism. I felt as though



Staff photo by Lily Harrington
Students walked out of Lexington High School on March 15 to protest gun violence for 45 minutes.

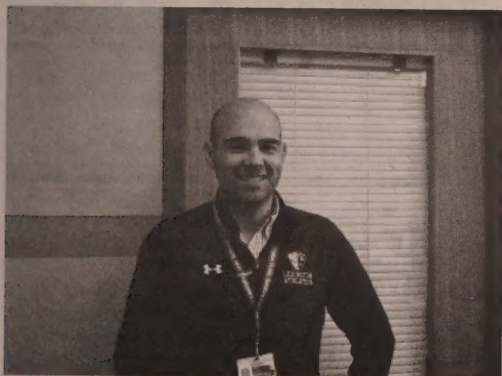
a lot of students were able to come together and make a difference, reform our political system and commemorate lives lost, which we usually don't get the opportunity to do as students," Ahmed said.

Other students had mixed feelings.

"I felt that it was better than doing nothing but it was really disappointing when I heard things like 'I get to miss the math test!' I also found it problematic when some people would say that students who didn't go to the green and didn't risk suspension weren't as dedicated

[as those who did], because that's pretty superficial. After, it just kind of died out and I hope that we can still keep the effort strong—inform more students, collaborate with other students who are involved with Black Lives Matter et cetera," Zoey Lin, a sophomore, said.

Committee revises schedule format for 2018-2019



Staff photo by Andrew Erler
John Murray poses for a photo.

brought up concerns regarding classes being too short and rushed.

"In my opinion, I think it would be better if we moved around less...if the blocks were longer," Alex Lonardo, an English teacher at LHS involved with the process, said.

After hearing suggestions from students, Murray attended a Student-Faculty Senate meeting, where he received input regarding the current schedule from LHS's senators. The senators commented on the current schedule made suggestions.

"More time in class was a major theme, as well as keeping I Block in some shape or form," Murray said.

The senate discussion led to the establishment of the Scheduling Committee, which includes students, faculty and parents.

"We have representation from every department because each department has... specific things that they want to contribute," Murray said. "[The committee] is trying to figure out how much time a class should actually be, and there is no research on how much a time a class should be."

There are tradeoffs to consider with the schedule.

"[Our] schedule [gives] students the opportunity to take eight classes...to give our students more flexibility and choice," Murray said. "[But] making a schedule with longer class periods means we have fewer classes meeting every day."

The Scheduling Committee has proposed numerous alternatives. The committee is "starting to put together some models...like a

60 minute time frame...[or] an alternating day schedule. [They] hope to have something to propose at the end of this school year or the start of the next school year," Murray said.

Ultimately, longer blocks would fit fewer blocks per day into the schedule, hinting at a six or seven day school week cycle. When the committee has created a few models, it will present the options to the entire staff. Ultimately, Principal Andrew Stephens will make the final decision.

"The most important thing for kids to know is that they are at the center of this decision...we are really doing this to maximize their learning opportunity and give them enough time during each class to learn," Murray said.

■ Elizabeth Ding
Christina Li
Staff Writers

Over the past year, John Murray, the associate principal of Lexington High School, has been collaborating with a scheduling com-

mittee consisting of students, faculty and parents to create a new schedule for next year.

Such discussion stemmed from trying to find a suitable replacement for X Block and resulted in pulling minutes from other blocks to form I Block. This change

Questions? Comments? Email us at musketnews@gmail.com

Editorial

Walking out is not enough

On March 15, Lexington High School students participated in a national walk-out against gun violence, a manifestation of our pent-up frustration towards political inaction. LHS should be praised for much of the walkout, especially the brave, resourceful students who organized the event.

Not only did the walkout provide a forum for students to formulate and voice their thoughts, it also reminded us that being an American is inherently tied to protest and embracing change. In walking out, LHS students joined a tremendously powerful group of youth activists that promises progress on a local and national scale.

However, there were aspects that could have been improved—and that's to be expected, as this is the first time students have organized a demonstration of this magnitude in recent years. Organizational issues—the inability of many participants to view or hear the speakers, protesters caught halfway down the street without a clear aisle for marching—turned attendees away.

Although much of this can be attributed to snow days and technical difficulties, these small issues should be addressed if LHS students plan similar events in the future.

While social media was used exceptionally well

to promote the event, there lacked considerable education regarding the history and effects of gun violence in the United States, especially in the context of race. This was particularly evident in the “Hands up, don’t shoot” signs—a slogan taken from campaigns against race-driven police brutality.

Yes, the walkout itself was an inspirational demonstration of student unity and passion, but the community requires concrete steps forward that incorporate both a concrete praxis, and a deeper understanding of the racial politics surrounding gun control. And beyond the immediate experience of the walkout, there are no clear next steps for the community to take. In other words, how do we prevent this movement from lapsing into a moment?

This movement was an amazing first step, but that is precisely how we need to look at the walkout—a beginning, not an end. We can’t simply leave the school on a half-day, protest for half an hour, and then go back to math class feeling like the problem is solved.

We need continue to educate ourselves on all sides of this issue. Rather than passively waiting for the next big walkout to be organized, we need to take an active role. In order to make real change happen, we need to make sure the momentum of the walkout continues.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the majority of the editorial board.

collegebored



■ Lasya Rajan
Columnist

I’m not sure if anyone can tell from the inverse relationship between the substance of these columns and the passage of time, but I am running out of ideas. However, I remain deeply committed to delivering the hard-hitting, insightful and groundbreaking analysis of the senior condition that the College Bored column demands. So, not willing to turn my back on my devoted readership, I turned to the sum total of known information for inspiration: Google.

After inputting a complex series of Boolean searches, I discovered that a common auto-completion of “graduation” was “graduation song vitamin c.” After clicking on a YouTube link, I was immediately immersed in a strange blend of traditional matriculation melodies with an early 2000s R&B beat that thrust me into a wistful revision of all my past high school experiences. I was amazed at how this piece of music was able to evoke such a specific brand of nostalgia from me. Naturally, I wanted to dissect the poetry and meter of this masterpiece. So without further delay, here is my analysis of Vitamin C’s “Graduation (Friends Forever).”

Vitamin C, born Colleen Ann Fitzpatrick, is a triple threat singer/songwriter, dancer and actress, most well known for her solo career in music. “Graduation” was the

“Graduation (Friends Forever)” is an appropriate tribute

last track off her 1999 debut album Vitamin C, which had several singles in the Billboard Top 100, and later went Platinum. However, “Graduation (Friends Forever)” is considered Vitamin C’s magnum opus. It continues to appear on the iTunes music chart at the end of every American school year.

Let’s take a look at some of the lyrics to understand how this track endures in the canon of graduation party playlists almost 20 years later:

“And so we talked all night about the rest of our lives

Where we’re gonna be when we turn 25

Keep thinking times will never change

Keep on thinking things will always be the same

But when we leave this year we won’t be coming back

No more hanging out cause we’re on a different track.”

The song includes samples from Johann Pachelbel’s “Canon in D Major,” which is frequently used as ambient music at formal events, like graduation ceremonies. The pairing of this canon with Vitamin C’s syncopated singing in the verse about “no more hanging out” elicits a somber, yet groovy mood.

“As we go on

We remember

All the times we

Had together

And as our lives change

Come whatever

We will still be

Friends Forever.”

The infamous chorus of “Graduation” is artfully con-

structed to be an absolute earworm. With an ABCBDBCB rhyme scheme and and quadrisyllabic lines, the symmetry of this reprise becomes as memorable as a bad yearbook photo.

“Will we think about tomorrow like we think about now?

Can we survive it out there?

Can we make it somehow?

I guess I thought that this would never end

And suddenly it’s like we’re women and men

Will the past be a shadow that will follow us ‘round?

Will these memories fade when I leave this town

I keep, I keep thinking that it’s not goodbye

Keep on thinking it’s a time to fly.”

Vitamin C remarks on the conflicting nature of coming of age in this stanza. Her rapid questions build a tone of uncertainty, though she concludes with the uplifting idea of greater independence on a stirring major chord. Vitamin C answers her own rhetorical questions on the bittersweet reality of graduation. She knows “that it’s not goodbye,” that the formative nature of high school experiences means that those memories will transcend the four years of time, which ultimately sums up this timeless song.

So as we go on into the final semester of high school, fellow Lexington Seniors, I urge you to remember all the times we had together. Because, come whatever, we will still be friends. Forever.

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Doors should be locked at LHS to ensure school safety

■ Talia Blatt
Jennifer Lo
Staff Writers

Recent movements have risen to address the increase in gun violence in the United States. The march in Boston on March 24 was attended by many Lexington High School students and the event demonstrated how big the movement

has become. Many students have stood up against the National Rifle Association and argued for their safety rights. In response to the support for student safety, LHS has taken reasonable and pragmatic ac-

tion to protect students.

Many of the doors around the LHS campus have been locked in hopes of increasing safety around campus. The increase in security measures has reassured students of their

safety by making it more difficult for outsiders to access the campus.

Other schools have enacted the same "locked doors" security and it has been quite effective. While the small in-

crease in protection does little considering the layout of LHS, the steps taken by the school has opened up a discussion about school safety and laid the platform for further action to be taken. Especially in the wake of the Parkland shootings, it is important for the school to respond and send a message to students that safety is a top priority.

Should LHS doors be locked?

Locked doors at Lexington are an unproductive measure

In response to rising concerns regarding school safety and gun violence, Lexington High School has adopted more stringent security measures. Specifically, the doors on the perimeter of LHS now lock between classes, and this limits access to the school during the day. While these changes are not unreasonable, they are ineffective and inconvenient.

To prevent intruders, the school has locked many ac-

cess points to all of the main buildings. But as students still have to enter and exit buildings to get to class, many of the doors also have to stay unlocked, which renders all of the locked doors pointless. Any intruder can still walk into any building in the school at any time; they might just have to walk 15 feet to use a different door. The very architecture of LHS—four disconnected buildings surrounding an open quad

—means that locking some doors will do little to ensure students' safety.

But while these new measures are ineffective at keeping out intruders, they exacerbate pre-existing difficulties for students. Getting to class within five minutes through congested stairways, hallways and across multiple buildings is already nearly impossible for many students. Now, with limited access points, certain stairways and hallways are

even more crowded, and getting from building to building takes longer. This is unfair not only to students but also to teachers who are not able to start class on time.

However, the most negative effect of this bolstered security system on LHS is psychological. Seeing a big red hand on doors all over the school reinforces a culture of fear. Everytime a student tries to enter a building, he or she is reminded of the reason for

this new security measure. In this case, the "maximum security" school environment is more conducive to fear and conformity than it is to learning and openness.

Yes, student safety should be a priority, and the prevalence of gun violence on campuses is something to be protested and changed. But the specific measures that LHS has implemented do little to improve safety, and do a lot to harm student movement.

Phones are misused and cause diminished social skills

■ Jusrin Padam
Columnist

Smartphones are one of the most controversial topics in our lives. Smartphones are known for helping people communicate through calling and emailing, but whether they actually help you connect with others is questionable.

I have seen people using phones in many social situations instead of communicating with the people they are with. People can get absorbed into their online life instead

of getting to know others or finding hobbies. Phones may be helpful in countless ways, but they are destroying the way people are able to physically communicate with others.

I would admit that I also have a tendency to get caught up in Buzzfeed quizzes or the newest level in a game I'm playing. Sometimes my mom even gets mad at me for not listening to her and ignoring my chores to watch Netflix or go on social media.

However, the reason we are like this is because our communication skills do not

match up to those of our parents and the generations before us. I have seen that the adults in my life find it much easier to meet new people and socialize in areas out of our generation's comfort zones. In our age group, if we don't know anyone at an event or feel bored, we don't even try to make an effort to change those feelings; we just focus our attention on our phones.

Nevertheless, parties or events outside of school are not the only place I have observed this phenomenon. This also happens almost everyday during lunch time. Lunch is a

time to be free of all the stress of school and taking time to be with friends and have fun before the next class starts.

When I sit down with my friends during lunch, sometimes I'll look around and see a group of people sitting together but each person is snapchatting or talking to someone else on their phone. Rather than simply communicating electronically, we should invite one another to hang out in person. This attitude could facilitate new friendships and meaningful conversation.

Sometimes technology is

great to show your friends a funny cat video or an interesting Instagram post you found, but using it instead of actually talking and bonding with your friends can prevent you from establishing strong, valuable connections.

Phones are able to help people of all ages do extraordinary things and have increased the ease of day-to-day tasks such as communicating over long-distances or getting to places. However, something that phones cannot do is create the chance for people to make new memories and experiences.

LHS students must recognize when they need academic help

■ Sanjna Das
Columnist

We all know that Lexington High School is an incredibly competitive school, though on the surface, it may seem like any other high school. Sure, we've got our fair share of proms, musicals and football games. Yet beneath all this, there's a competitive atmosphere that manifests itself when we compare grades, try to take as many AP-level classes as possible and participate in tons of extracurriculars.

While competition is certainly helpful in pushing us to do our best, it can sometimes mean that struggles are pushed aside for fear of ostracism. We don't want to feel academically left out, whether it be in earning the same grades as our peers or in taking AP-level classes. We tell ourselves that the poor grade in math was a result of staying up late the night before or a bad day, when it was really because the material itself was confusing. This cover-up for actual academic struggles seems to fit right in with LHS's competitive at-

mosphere, since the common perception is that hardly anyone finds the academic material challenging.

The truth is, however, we all have our own weaknesses, and it's important to recognize what these areas are and reach out for help. Rather than simply pretending a couple of bad grades happened by accident, the goal should be to connect with peers, teachers and other mentors for help when these types of situations arise.

In college and in life in general, there's no hand-holding like there was in preschool.

And those who succeed aren't perfect, nor do they pretend they are by covering up mistakes and confusion with excuses. Instead, they're the ones who actively reach out to teachers, friends and family for help when a academic or social problem arises.

LHS is no exception. Intelligence isn't defined by the number of A's you get or your GPA. Instead, it's the ability to recognize your faults and weaknesses and work to address them by reaching out for help. We don't have to wait until we graduate to begin this process.

Take the time to meet with a teacher during I Block to ask a clarifying question, or ask a friend about homework when it doesn't make sense. While it takes time to be comfortable with acknowledging when you need help, there's no way to become good at it without beginning at some point. Practicing this in high school will make you much more prepared for any curveball that life throws your way because you'll be equipped with the confidence to reach out to your network of friends, family and other role models for help.

State political candidates speak to Lexington students during I Blocks

■ Talia Blatt
Clare Wiessen
Staff Writers

A new opportunity is available for students during I Block. Students interested in learning more about today's politics and interacting with current political candidates are welcome to join Lawrence David for I Blocks dedicated to guest speakers: political candidates running for office.

David, who teaches AP U.S. History and AP Government and Politics, wants to provide a space where students can interact with political candidates and hot button issues up-close, while learning more about the intricacies of the American political process.

"I think it's important for [students] to get a sense of who candidates are, what makes them tick, why they're running...and provide them with a little more face-to-face experience with the political process," David said.

Students who attended one of these I Blocks had the chance to discuss issues with U.S. Senate candidate Beth Lindstrom. Lindstrom, a Re-

publican running for a Massachusetts Senate seat, spoke to students about what she hopes to accomplish as a member of the Senate.

William Thomas, a senior who attended Lindstrom's talk, stayed behind to ask a few questions.

"After the presentation was over...[Lindstrom] stayed back to talk to anyone else who had questions. This was interesting because it provided a quick break from all the political talk that we hear politicians use all the time and instead got to communicate with a candidate in a more natural way," Thomas said.

As a Republican candidate, Lindstrom spoke to a room with many students who disagreed with her views. Some students, such as Thomas, praised the opportunity to hear differing perspectives.

"It was really cool having a Republican speak because many students at LHS hear 'Republican' and automatically disagree with them before giving them a chance to speak. It was nice to have a Republican here that LHS students could listen to," Thomas said.

Shira Garbis, a senior in

David's AP Government and Politics class, saw value in hearing a viewpoint that contrasts with her own.

"I liked that I got chance to think about about her views, the views of the 'other side,' and think critically about my own," Garbis said.

The I Block speakers also allow students to educate themselves on topics they will have the chance to vote on in the coming years. While the majority of LHS students are not eligible to vote because they are not yet 18, David believes it is still important to be aware and educated on the issues.

"Even if you can't vote, you can still have a voice...you can still influence your peers. You still are affected by the laws, by the actions taken by the politicians who are elected. You can still work on a campaign or against a candidate," David said.

Students such as Garbis feel that as they reach voting age, it is their duty to be politically informed.

"I think being politically engaged as a student is responsibility. It's a responsibility to not only be aware of issues that surround us, but use



Staff photo by Megha Prasad
Lawrence David poses with a guest speaker from Raise Up.

our rights to actually make change in America's political environment," Garbis said.

Students all over the country are becoming increasingly active in local and national politics, with the student walk out in support of the school shooting in Parkland, FL, and the March for Our Lives in the past few weeks. David attributes this rise in activism to the growth in politics in popular culture, from political sketches on Saturday Night Live to NFL players

kneeling during the national anthem.

"There have been a lot more controversial things that have happened in the last year or so under the Trump administration that have made students aware and unhappy," David said.

More political candidates are coming to future I Blocks. Students interested in learning more about local politics can look in homeroom announcements or talk to David for more information.

Lexington Public Schools welcomes a new superintendent

■ Jyothsna Bolleddula
Alexandria Snyders
Dykeman
Staff Writers

On Jan. 22, there was a unanimous vote in the Lexington School Committee to elect Taunton Superintendent Julie Hackett to the superintendent post in town. She will start on July 1.

Many Lexington High School students have ideas on what makes a good superintendent. "I think I'd want a superintendent that supports the education system and is prepared to help all students succeed," Alexa Infelise, a sophomore, said. "I'm looking forward to seeing what changes the new superintendent makes to help Lexington students, especially LHS students, improve."

Roshni Ray, a sophomore, also has a strong idea of what she would like to see in a superintendent. "I believe that a great superintendent has a clear vision for the school district, evaluates challenges with fresh eyes and is an effective communicator," Ray

said.

The Musket caught up with Dr. Hackett to find out more about our new incoming superintendent.

1) Where have you worked in the past?

I began my career as a high school English teacher in Old Town, Maine. I was then encouraged to apply for a position as dean of students in the same high school. I next took a position as a middle school principal in Maine. One of the highlights of that position was that I had an opportunity to work on implementing Governor Angus King's 1:1 Maine Learning Technology Initiative, putting laptops in the hands of all middle school students. Next, I worked in central office as a director of curriculum, instruction and assessment for a number of years. In 2007, I relocated to Massachusetts and took a job as an assistant superintendent in Taunton. I then became deputy superintendent of teaching and learning in Brookline. Finally, I became superintendent of schools in Taunton, a position I've held since 2009.

2) What is something the LHS community might not know about you?

I am the first in my family to attend college, and I am the proud product of an outstanding public education. I owe everything to the great teachers in my life who helped me believe in myself.

3) Describe yourself in three words

I—never—quit.

4) What are you hoping to bring to the Lexington community?

I hope to bring a sense of joy and balance to the Lexington community. I believe that every young person has the right to a high-quality public education, and I know that happens in Lexington. I also know that there is concern in the community about the well-being of our students who are feeling stressed and anxious. I want to support and maintain the very high standards in Lexington; at the same time, I want to make sure that we are doing all that we can to address the social and emotional needs of our students. I want all Lexington students to be happy and hun-

gry to learn.

5) What are you most looking forward to?

People are what makes a school system like Lexington great. I can't wait to get into classrooms and schools to see all of the exciting things happening in the system. I'm also looking forward to hearing the great ideas of students, staff, parents and school community members. We have a lot of work to do, but it will be fun.

6) What are the main things you are hoping to change/build upon?

I have done my homework, but I still have a lot to learn about Lexington. My job as a leader is to figure out not just what I want, but what we want as a school community, and then it's up to me to pave the way to make that happen. One way I hope to get at this is through a comprehensive strategic planning process, where we'll be able to create a clear vision, mission, goals and shared values. So far, I've heard a great deal of interest from the Lexington school community in expanding K-8 foreign languages, which I

would love to pursue, among other ideas. I know there are many challenges and financial hurdles to overcome, but we can do anything if we put our minds to it. In my mind, foreign language in the early grades is a vehicle for unification and a great way to integrate people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. It will be interesting to see what rises to the top of the list of priorities when we begin the strategic planning process.

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- Heike Arendt
- Debbie Chan
- Irwan The
- The McCallum family

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LHS choruses tour Greece and Bulgaria in April

■ Jinhee Heo
Pranathi Srirangam
Staff Writers

The Greece and Bulgaria tour took place from April 12 to 21 this year. LHS choral students performed in four concerts in four different cities: Athens, the capital of Greece, as well as Volos, Thessaloniki and Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

There is a three year cycle for the choral tours.

"There's an international tour, and then a bus tour, like a domestic tour and then the third year we bring in a guest artist," Jason Iannuzzi, the director of choruses at LHS and organizer of the trip, said. "Last year we had a guest art-

ist in, so in our cycle we're due for an international tour."

The trip isn't specific to Greece and Bulgaria as locations change each tour. The number of people on the trip is larger than previous years with around a 160 travellers.

"The last tour we took was in 2015, and that was to China, and in 2012 before that it was Sweden, Finland and Estonia," Iannuzzi said.

Locations are determined to challenge and provide diverse experiences for the chorists.

"I try to choose a place that will offer some repertoire challenges that we've never had before," Iannuzzi said.

Greece and Bulgaria were chosen to provide cultural enrichment and a challenge for

the singers.

"We've been learning different pieces in Greek and Bulgarian and learning about those styles of music—the different rhythms, the vocal timbre, the pronunciation," Mona Tavangar, a senior choral student, said.

Learning the countries' unique styles of music has widened the students' musical horizons.

"The Bulgarian choirs and their particular ways of producing sounds, which is a kind of belty, heavy brassy kind of singing sound which is very different from the typical Western, European choir sound, which is a whole new level of challenge," Iannuzzi said. "Greece does not have a nationalized choral identity

so that's a little bit more challenging."

"I'm so excited because this trip is a combination of sightseeing, singing, cultural exchange and making memories with friends," Tavangar said. "I'm really looking forward to singing in a different environment and seeing how people react. Also—the food."

During the trip itself, there was both sightseeing and choral events. In Greece, students visited the Acropolis, the temple of Poseidon, as well as other scenic locations. In Bulgaria, students visited the Rila Monastery, one of the oldest operating monasteries in Europe.

The choruses had joint concerts with two other groups in Greece.

"They're basically made up of students the age of the students who are in the choruses and that's really exciting because we found whatever trip we've taken, we've always done these exchanges and they end up being the thing that students end up remembering the most," Iannuzzi said.

One example of this is during the China trip of 2015.

"When we were in China and we had a little offtime, the kids were playing basketball with the students of the Chinese school. They were playing ping pong, whatever, and behaving just like students behave and it was amazing because music really is this kind of glue that holds us all together," Iannuzzi said.

LHS students visit China through Chinese Exchange

■ Jinhee Heo
Pranathi Srirangam
Staff Writers

The biennial Chinese Exchange program took place from April 9 to 21. Lexington High School Mandarin students visited four cities over two weeks to apply the linguistic skills they've learned and experience Chinese culture firsthand.

The program was established 13 years ago by Lili Pan, who retired last year. Now, Jieying Yao, a Level Two and AP Mandarin teacher, leads the exchange program.

"If you are willing to learn more about China, to see, to visit and tour China by yourself, this is a great opportunity," Yao said.

Students first went to Hangzhou. There, they lived with the Chinese exchange students for five to six days, attending school, going to clubs and even visiting family members alongside them, just as they would in Lexington. Most LHS students were hosted by the same students they hosted in Lexington while others were paired up with different students of the same gender.

Prior to the trip, the students created presentations about their lives in Lexington to share with their Chinese peers, many of whom have never been to the states.

After spending five to six days with the exchange students, they went to Xi'an to visit the terracotta warriors

in the Xi'an Museum, and then they traveled to Beijing. Throughout the trip, students completed assignments based on their level of experience, all of which will contribute to the final presentation they will present to their Lexington classmates.

"Beijing is the capital of China, so that represents the current events, the political center, and Shanghai is the metropolitan, economic center of China, so it shows the modernized, the tomorrow of China," Yao said. "[The] Xi'an terracotta museum represents the historical side of China, and Hangzhou is the most scenic, and leisure and rhythmic city so we go to all four different styles: historical sites, important [buildings]. Because China has many different aspects, we want to see as many as possible."

Exchange students are excited to attend the trip for a wide variety of reasons, academic or otherwise.

"I want to go [on the exchange] because I was born in China and was adopted from Hubei when I was one year old," Stella Thé, a sophomore and level three honors student, said. "I've always wanted to go back with my parents, but I wanted to take this opportunity to go with the school because it is important to me, and also because one of my good friends is going and it is going to be a great opportunity for me to learn about Chinese culture and get to learn about it with my friend."

All Mandarin students are encouraged to apply for the

trip. The application process includes an interview and approval from subject teachers. Freshmen were unfortunately unable to attend for the first time due to safety concerns over large group sizes. However, Yao encourages them to apply for the next trip.

"[The purpose of this program is] to see [Chinese] culture and society because China has a long history but the modern China is very different from lots of movies and other things," Yao said. "It's just such an eye-opening experience, and our students and exchange students can form long-lasting friendships and they can continue to be pen pals or now even chat online so it's amazing to see how these young students get to see a different culture."

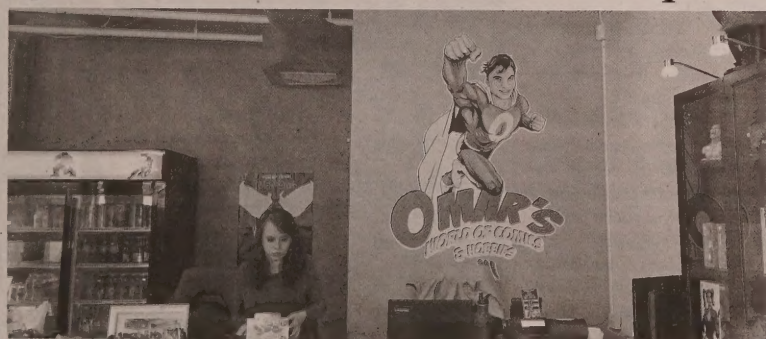
New Lexington Center businesses open in spring

■ Anelga Hajjar
Jessica Karson
Staff Writers

Lexington Center is adding two new businesses to the map in 2018. Omar's World of Comics opened on Waltham St. on Jan. 15. Abbott's Frozen custard opened on Massachusetts Ave in spring.

In the past, residents of Lexington have expressed mixed feelings about the shopping options in the Center.

"While we have a pretty good variety of places to go to eat, I think that the other business are not places that I would want to go to," Ashley Burke, a Lexington High School junior, said.



Staff photo by Matt Pearlman
"Omar's World of Comics had its grand opening on Jan. 15"

Omar's World of Comics aims to be an inclusive social

setting.

"The mission is to provide a place of employment for people with disabilities. The

hope is that it becomes not only a worksite, but a place of social gathering for all people, but especially people with

disabilities," Sally Hoops, the General Manager of Omar's World of Comics, said.

This also ties into the location of the Center. "The location in Lexington Center was chosen specifically because of its proximity to Lexington High School and the LABBB program. We wanted the LABBB students to have easy access," Hoops said.

"It's really cool...Even though Lexington is a really liberal, open, left-wing place, most of us still disregard disabilities and use ableist rhetoric. This could help broaden our views of the world. Also, comic books are just cool," Zoey Lin, a sophomore, said.

Concerto competition winners perform with LHS orchestra

■ Victor Chen
Narek Sahakian
Staff Writers

The annual Concerto Competition series featured this year's winners: violinist Arun Asthagiri, pianist Jennifer Li and clarinetists Ben Choi and Richard Zhou. All musicians will be performing with the Chamber Orchestra on different occasions throughout the year.

Asthagiri, a sophomore, will be playing the first movement of Mendelssohn's "Violin Concerto in E Minor" next fall.

"This is my first time playing a major concerto with an orchestra," Asthagiri said. "I am really excited to work with a large group of musicians to put together an amazing performance."

While he was slightly nervous due to the high competition, "there was a friendly environment and I knew many

people there which lessened the pain," Asthagiri said.

Participants in the Concerto Competition were required to perform for a panel of judges. The judges ultimately selected the musicians they believed were most worthy of being featured in a concert.

Li, a freshman, will be playing the first movement of Saint Saens' "Piano Concerto No. 2."

"This concert is special to me because I really enjoyed the process of learning the

piece, and it means a lot to be able to perform with the orchestra," Li said.

Li took steps to prepare technically and psychologically for the concert.

"I've always had trouble keeping my nerves under control, so I try to focus on preparing myself both technically and musically. I look forward to rehearsing with the orchestra and working on the piece in general," Li said. "Music has taught me about the significance of persever-

ance and helps me remain patient with myself...It has made a positive impact on my creativity and allows me to express myself. I hope to stay calm and focused."

The first of the concert series was held on April 10, at 7:00 p.m. in the Lexington High School Auditorium, featuring Li as the first soloist. The other winners, Choi and Zhou, both seniors at LHS, will play the Krommer Double Clarinet Concerto later during the year.

Standing Together Concert



Staff photo by Anya Ghali
Annie Zhu, a junior, participates in the Standing Together Concert.

■ Maia Hahn-Du Pont
Emily Ma
Staff Writers

On March 12, singers across Lexington joined together to participate in the "Standing Together in Song Concert." It consisted of two honors choirs from Lexington High School, the LHS a capella group Pitchpipes, the Women's Choir from Clarke Middle School and the choruses from Bridge, Bowman and Harrington elementary schools.

Singers of all ages performed standing side by side.

"It was a really cool experience that allowed both students and parents to see the progression of the choral program through the years," Annie Zhu, a junior at LHS and member of the Women's Chorus, said.

During the concert, each chorus sang a few pieces individually before joining together to sing the finale, "Stand Together," by Jim Pappoulis.

"[The finale] really showed how music can bring together people of all ages throughout a community," Zhu said.

The purpose of the concert was to not only open a door for students, especial-

ly younger ones, to consider continuing music through the Lexington Music Department, but also to reinforce the concept of musical community throughout Lexington.

"I thought it was really awesome to see so many performers especially at the younger ages. We're really lucky to have such an established music department throughout Lexington schools. It was a pleasure to sing with and also to see the younger kids perform," Zach Hahn-DuPont, a senior and member of Concert Choir at LHS, said.

Teachers from beyond the music faculty in Lexington have noticed the town's music community.

"I think there's a lot of really talented musician here...I remember people rehearsing next door," Sheryl Kaczmarek, a social studies teacher at LHS, said.

"The massive amount of love and support in this welcoming community is so inspiring and has given me so much motivation to keep pursuing music even beyond my years at LHS," Zhu said. "The community that forms as a result of all these different choruses and a capella groups is not one you can find elsewhere."

LHS Slam Poetry club is growing

■ Jake Kanef
Athena Li
Staff Writers

At Lexington High School, the Slam Poetry Club is a small but growing group. Slam poetry is a type of poetry where participants read their individually written poems without props, costumes or music to an audience.

"The way I see slam poetry is as sort of an amalgamation [of] poetry and performance art," Kelly Hui, a sophomore, said. "Another word for it is spoken word, which is really just what it is—people speaking words they write. It really can be incredibly powerful."

Members of the LHS Slam Poetry Club are currently preparing for Louder Than A Bomb, a Slam Poetry festival and competition in Bos-

ton that begins in April. In addition to performing at the Louder than a Bomb competition, the Slam Poetry Club plans to host a performance at the end of the school year in June.

"I'm very excited. I haven't really started writing my poem but I'm hyped. I love that I get to share something personal and genuine with strangers," Mira Ward, a sophomore, said. "I think it's epic that there's a community where you can use your poetic voice for social change. I've always loved poetry. I think it's one of the most organic forms of self expression out there."

Slam Poetry has also given students the courage to come out of their shells and express themselves via their written work.

"Slam poetry has definite-

ly kind of gotten me to push myself in terms of being more open, especially as poetry can get really raw and intimate," Hui said.

While the Slam Poetry Club has only about 12 members, it's a close-knit group, which stems from students being able to express themselves in an intimate and powerful manner. This develops a sense of community among poets who participate in competitions.

"I have a poem I'm working on that I'm really excited for, and while I don't think I'm going to place in LTAB or anything, I'm just looking forward to it," Hui said. "I went last year and the atmosphere was just so amazing, all the other poets were so supportive and such an eclectic group. It's a small group, but we're a family," Hui said.



Staff photo by Shweta Kondapi
Members of the LHS Slam Poetry Club pose for a photo.

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APRIL SHOWER BRINGS WINDPOWER

Cartoon by Narek Sahakian

April Word Search

- ADVENTURES
APRIL
BREAK
CHOCOLATE
CRAMMING
EXERCISE
HAPPINESS
POSITIVITY
PUPPY
SLEEP
SUMMER
SUNSHINE

B	N	K	Q	A	J	C	G	K	I	V	F	O	W	K	I	H	I	Y	
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U	V	O	T	R	M	V	H	Y	D	E	N	A	L	G	G	B	I	E	Y

Word Search by Jennifer Lo

Lexington students participate in volleyball tournament

■ Samiha Kazi
Ollie Rouke
Staff Writers

The annual Lexington High School Intramural Volleyball Tournament took place on the second week of March this year. The event was organized

by the boys varsity volleyball captains and supervised by their coach, Jane Bergin. This year, the captains are Cameron Closs, Kevin Lee and Michael Read, all of whom are seniors.

There were 24 teams participating in the tournament. A set of requirements and guidelines

were organized and enforced by the captains of each team to ensure fair competition.

Teams consisted of eight to 12 players from any grade, including a maximum of two players who have previously played on an LHS volleyball team. Additionally, teams had to be co-ed, with at least two students of different genders playing on the court at all times. The entry fee for each team was \$60; all proceeds were given to Minutemen volleyball camps and clinics.

This year, teams came up with team names that ranged from puns such as "Stump Set Spike" and "Forrest Bump," to inside jokes among teammates such as "Blake."

"I'm really glad I played because I almost didn't," Reed Weiler, a senior and member of team "Blake," said. "Now

I have a lot of new memories with that group of people, so it was really fun."

Originally scheduled to run from March 5 to March 8, snow days disrupted the schedule for the volleyball tournament. The tournament became a two-week long event with missing days in between.

The top two teams from each group advanced to the playoffs of the tournament. The 12 teams battled it out, with the fifth-seeded "Chads and Brads" ultimately coming out on top.

The team, organized by Ji Hoon Ko, consisted of seniors and juniors.

"There was no real theme. We were just friends, but he wanted a competitive team," Knut Lundstrom, a junior, said. "[Ko] had planned the roster out so we would win."

The tournament organizers hoped that the tournament would provide an opportunity for LHS students to relax.

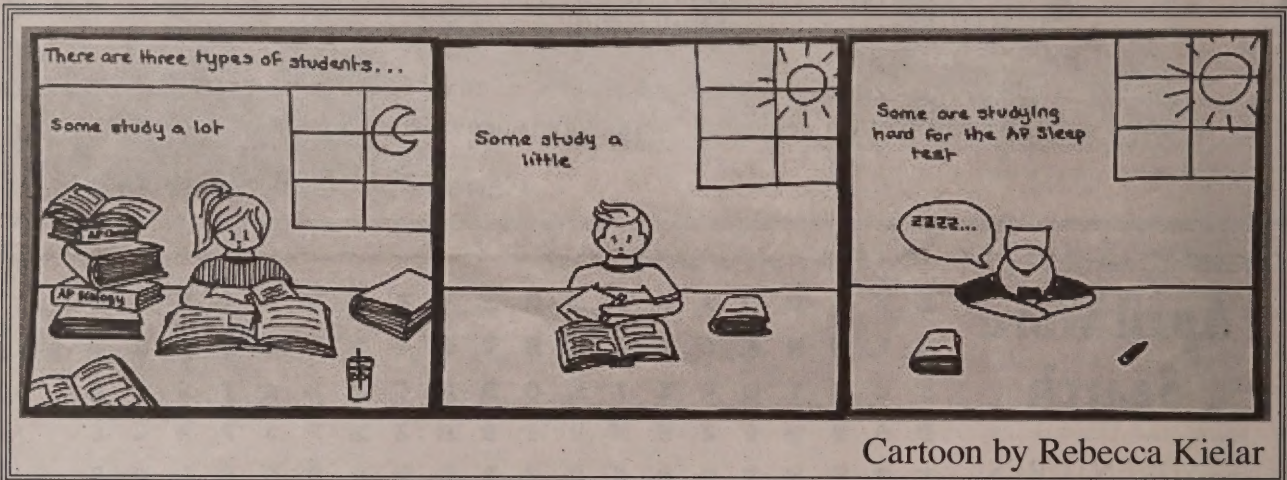
"I hope that everyone had a great time. I feel like we don't have enough intramural sports or school-wide events like these," Weiler said. "They really bring the whole school together and are really fun to play in, even if you don't play the sport."

The captains encouraged friendly competition among the participants, as they hoped for the tournament to inspire students to create new memories with each other.

"Hopefully some people will have a newfound appreciation for events like these, and maybe even some will pursue volleyball, because it's been an amazing experience for me and my teammates," Weiler said.



Staff photo by Linda Kong
From left to right: Cameron Closs, Michael Read, Kevin Lee.



Cartoon by Rebecca Kielar

Synchro Skating team wins 26th U.S. championship

■ Kylin Gao
Lily Lawrence
Staff Writers

Lexington's Hayden Recreation Center is the home rink of five nationally ranked synchro skating teams.

The two internationally competitive teams, the Haydenettes and Lexettes, both consist of 20 skaters. In April, the Haydenettes, the senior team, placed seventh at the World Synchronized Skating Championships in Stockholm, Sweden. The team won first place at the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships in February. This is the 26th time in Haydenettes history that they have achieved this honor.

The Lexettes were awarded a silver medal at the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships in Portland, Oregon,

where they competed against 11 other teams from all over the U.S.

The Lexettes also competed in the French Cup in February against nine junior level teams from five different countries, placing third. Most recently they competed in the Junior World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, finishing in sixth place.

Maddie Graham, a senior at LHS, is a skater on the Lexettes. "Although [the] Lexettes and Haydenettes are groups of extremely competitive individuals, we support each other while having fun. We get to meet great people all around the world and further expand our knowledge of cultures other than our own along the way," Graham said.

The skating teams frequently encounter people from other teams.

"All of the other teams are



Hayden Star Mates placed 3rd at Easterns and 5th in the 2018 US Synchronized Skating Championships.

very nice and generally there is a really good energy between the teams. We all understand how much time and effort goes into these programs, and we all make sure to wish each other good luck and congratulations. We're all competitive, but it's healthy competition," Emily Barnes, a sophomore at LHS

on the Ice Mates, said.

"My team this year has taught me so much about determination and endurance, and, of course, teamwork," Joyce Guo, a skater on Lexettes and a junior at LHS said. "Our coach told us we would be doing four run-throughs in around 30 minutes. That prac-

Staff photo compiled by Kelly Hui
Courtesy of KrPhotogs Photography

tice certainly tested my physical and mental strength, but we pushed through as a team."

Teamwork is a focal point for the Lexettes. "A close and dynamic team is important and it is what makes the team successful," Rebecca Ye, a senior and skater on the Lexettes, said.